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The Director of Central Intelligence
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National Intelligence Council

EXECUTIVE BRIEF

The Soviet Attitude Toward CFE

- Achieving an agreement to limit Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) remains a high priority for Gorbachev, and he still aims to achieve an agreement this year.
- The collapse of the Warsaw Pact and impending unification of Germany have seriously complicated the Soviet military calculus in CFE and thereby created political problems in Moscow. But Gorbachev continues to see CFE as vital to larger domestic and foreign policy objectives.
- Partly to appease Soviet military leaders, Gorbachev must make certain that the size of the German Army is limited and that Soviet forces are allotted at least 35 to 40 percent of total Warsaw Pact equipment in the Atlantic-to-the-Urals Zone.
 - [] the Germans have indicated to the Soviets that they would agree to a 50-percent cut in their army-- bringing them in the range of Soviet desires.
 - We judge the Soviets would need an allotment of 35 to 40 percent of total Pact equipment to be confident of their ability to defend their territory.
- Key to resolving the current impasse on aircraft limits will be negotiating mutually acceptable constraints on land-based naval air forces.
- Even if all of the East's proposals were accepted, the General Staff's confidence in the Soviet Union's ability to conduct deep offensive operations against NATO would remain very low.
- The Intelligence Community is concerned about several monitoring issues, including the continuing movement of treaty-limited equipment east of the Urals and about the possibility the Soviets may resubordinate large numbers of combat aircraft to land-based naval air forces.

This Executive Brief reflects the view of the Intelligence Community expressed at a special warning meeting held on 24 May 1990. It was drafted by the National Intelligence Officer for General Purpose Forces and informally coordinated with representatives from CIA, DLA, and State/INR.

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The Soviets say they are reviewing their positions at the CFE negotiations because of events in Eastern Europe and German unification. This has led to some pessimism in the West over the prospects for successful completion of a CFE Treaty.

The Intelligence Community, however, believes that Gorbachev has a significant stake in the negotiations and that Soviet military concerns can be accommodated without significantly enhancing Soviet offensive capabilities.

Gorbachev's Priorities

In our view, Gorbachev is committed to achieving a CFE agreement this year. He sees an agreement as a prerequisite to the planned large-scale reallocation of resources away from the military, to the establishment of a new European security order (to be initiated with a CSCE summit this December), and to the success of negotiations on short-range nuclear forces. We also believe that he recognizes the need to achieve an agreement in the next few months:

- After German unification, he will have much less leverage to use in efforts to constrain the size of the German Army.
- The rapid dissolution of the Warsaw Pact means that the longer the negotiations continue, the more difficult bloc-to-bloc negotiations become.
- NATO has stressed that a CSCE summit is contingent on the successful completion of CFE.

The Military Dimension

The demise of the Warsaw Pact and Soviet unilateral reductions are removing the Soviets' capability to conduct deep offensive operations against NATO without extensive reinforcements from inside the USSR. The CFE reductions

will eliminate the superiority in forces they have traditionally reviewed as essential for offensive operations. Moreover, we believe that, even if all of the East's proposals were accepted, the General Staff's confidence in the Soviet Union's ability to conduct deep offensive operations against NATO would remain very low.

Gorbachev continues to consider a CFE Treaty as in the Soviet interest, but the conservative military takes a somewhat different view that lately has been receiving a more favorable hearing. The Soviet General Staff has made it clear that its underlying assumptions about CFE have changed significantly over the past six months. The military sees a united Germany as increasing the threat to the Soviet Union. The General Staff is concerned that as a result of the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Eastern Europe, and the acceptance of limits on Soviet forces within the Soviet Union, that the military could no longer guarantee the defense of the homeland. CFE, in the view of the General Staff, could institutionalize Soviet military inferiority.

Consequently, we judge, the Soviets will not agree to a CFE treaty unless they can achieve two vital objectives: limiting the size of the German Army and, under the "equipment sufficiency rule," being allowed to keep a satisfactory proportion of aggregate Pact equipment.

The Soviets have indicated for some time that they want the German Army capped at about 50 percent of current strength. They have failed to bring this about in the Two Plus Four Talks, but [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the Germans and the Soviets may have agreed that the German military would be reduced as part of overall personnel reductions in CFE. We do not know whether this would take the form of a bilateral protocol to a CFE Treaty or would directly address the problem through a personnel sufficiency rule for the Central Region.

Of vital concern to the Soviets are the size of the German Army and the proportion of total Pact equipment the Soviets would be able to keep.

The Soviets assert that their loss of control over Eastern Europe and the expected failure of the East Europeans to fill their CFE allotments of equipment would result in "Potemkin parity." The Soviets want to compensate for this by setting their allotment between 35 and 40 percent of the total Pact equipment in the Atlantic-to-the-Urals Zone.

- We believe that a Soviet allotment of at least 35-40 percent could increase the Soviet General Staff's confidence in its strategic defensive capability along the country's border.
- Some analysts believe the higher range would also provide some limited capability to conduct offensive operations either in the Central Region or along NATO's flanks.

Other Unresolved Differences

Still to be agreed upon are such issues as counting rules, definitions, ceilings of treaty-limited equipment, destruction requirements, interzonal flow, and inspection quotas. The difficulty of resolving these technical matters has contributed to the sense of pessimism over CFE prospects.

Limiting aircraft remains a stumbling block to progress in CFE and the key to resolving it will be negotiating constraints on land-based naval aircraft. Gorbachev likely will continue to insist that any aircraft ceilings exclude land-based naval air unless the West is willing to engage in naval arms control. The Soviets, for their part, probably would be prepared to defer aircraft reductions to follow on negotiations.

Monitoring Concerns

The Intelligence Community is monitoring Soviet activities that could, if continued or expanded, result in circumventing the spirit of the CFE treaty. The Soviets could, for example,

- Continue to move substantial amounts of treaty-limited equipment east of the Urals before the treaty is signed.
- Resubordinate substantial amounts of equipment to paramilitary forces.
- Transfer substantial numbers of aircraft to their naval air forces.

The most serious possibility is the first one. The Soviets are moving tanks and artillery from the Atlantic-to-the-Urals Zone into storage east of the Urals. This equipment could be used to establish a strategic reserve, though no new units have yet been formed. The size and readiness of such a reserve would help determine US requirements for reserves available to reinforce Europe and, therefore, figure in future East/West discussions about naval force levels.

Even if all of the East's proposals were accepted, the General Staff's confidence in the Soviet Union's ability to conduct deep offensive operations against NATO would remain very low.

The Soviets have announced that they are expanding their internal security forces, but this is clearly in response to the need for more such forces to deal with domestic unrest. So far, there has been very little resubordination of treaty-limited equipment to paramilitary forces.

Finally, some analysts foresee the possibility of unconstrained resubordination of aircraft to the Soviet naval air forces. They contend that Soviet land-based naval aircraft must be explicitly limited. Others suggest it might be possible to find a mutually acceptable way to bring the more threatening land-based naval aircraft, particularly the Backfires and Fencers, under the aircraft limits of CFE.